

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

dialogue: the conversation between characters in a story or other work

direct quotation: a speaker's exact words

HERE'S HOW

Dialogue can be used to relate story events. It can also show what characters are like and what they are feeling. To make sure readers know who is speaking, follow these rules:

Rule 1. Enclose a speaker's exact words in quotation marks. Mark the beginning and end of a direct quotation with quotation marks. If you divide a direct quotation into two parts, inserting words like *he said* or *she said*, enclose each part of the quoted remark.

One-Part Remark: "I dislike dogs," Mr. Sands remarked.

Two-Part Remark: "Your problem," Claude said, "is that you are insensitive."

Rule 2. Use a capital letter to begin a quoted remark. However, begin the second part of a divided quotation with a lowercase letter unless it's a proper noun or a new sentence.

One-Part Remark: Mr. Sands looked at Claude and said, "Not in a million years!"

Two-Part Remark: "That dog's growl," said Mr. Sands, "scares me to death."

Two Sentences: "What a funny idea!" Claude exclaimed. "You just crack me up."

Rule 3. Use commas to set off explanatory words such as *he said* or *she replied*. The commas belong before the opening quotation mark and inside the closing one.

Beginning: Mr. Sands said, "There is no way that I'm adopting that dog."

Middle: "There is no way," Mr. Sands said, "that I'm adopting that dog."

End: "There is no way that I'm adopting that dog," Mr. Sands said.

Rule 4. Always place a comma or a period inside the closing quotation marks. The same rule applies if a direct quotation is a question or an exclamation. Place the question mark or exclamation point here, *inside* the closing quotation marks, as well.

Question: "What kind of pet interests you?" asked Claude.

Exclamation: "I like cats!" Mr. Sands exclaimed.

Statement: Claude commented, "Me, too."

STUDENT LESSON SUMMARY, CONTINUED

Rule 5. To change speakers, begin a new paragraph and use a new set of quotation marks.

EXAMPLE: DIALOGUE

“The skunk popped out just as my dog Droopy and I crossed the path,” Claude said.

“What did you do?” Mr. Sands asked.

“Well, I just stood there, but Droopy went straight for the critter, barking and baring its teeth. The skunk turned and let Droopy have it.”

“And he *still* stinks after two weeks?” Mr. Sands asked in disbelief.